Nuggets of News

GOLD HILL HISTORICAL SOCIETY
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recording the past for the future
1986

P.O. Box 26
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325 Second Ave.

September 1992

Forty-five years ago, the city of Gold Hill had a grand celebration for its most famous ex-resident, Ben Hur Lampman. The gala event was noteworthy enough to be recognized by *Newsweek* magazine. An article titled "The Oracle of Gold Hill" was published in the June 23, 1947 issue.

Just who was Mr. Lampman and how did he come to mean so much to the citizens of Gold Hill?

Ben Hur Lampman was born in Barron, Wisconsin August 12, 1886, to Herbert Howard and Viola Lampman. Ben had one brother, Rex H., who was a year older than him.

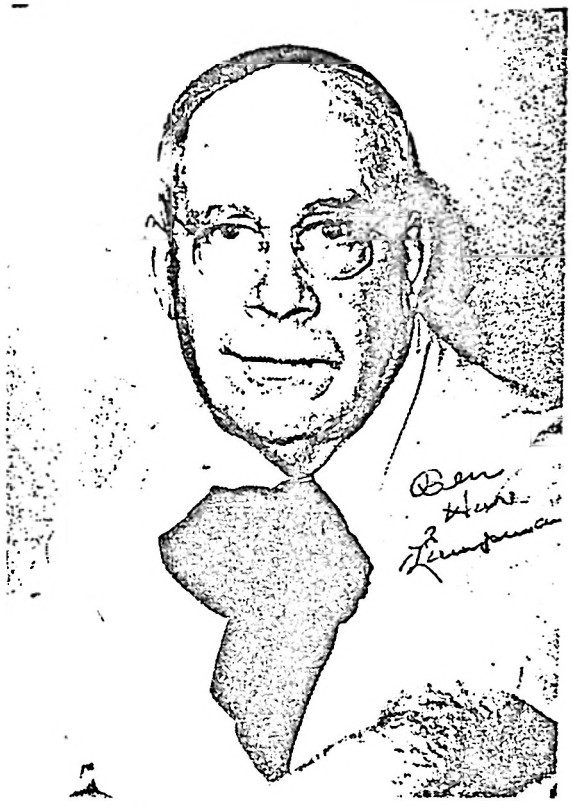
Lampman's father owned and operated the local newspaper in Barron. When Ben was four years old the family moved to Neche, North Dakota, where his father founded another newspaper.

Ben was an avid reader and read books from his father's vast library. His 'rithmetic and grammar was not the best, but his compositions left the reader in awe of his prose. Lampman left school at the age of 15 and set out on his own traveling to Canada and the mid-west. Lampman educated himself by reading anything he could get his hands on. Being born into a newspaper family, Ben pursued the newspaper profession, settling in Michigan, North Dakota. He was 19 years old when he and a friend founded the *Michigan Arena*.

While living in Michigan, North Dakota, Lampman met and married a young high school teacher, Lena Sheldon. Miss Sheldon was from New York. Ben and Lena had four children, however one died in infancy.

Lampman operated the *Arena* from 1905 until 1912. He sold the paper, and headed west hoping the climate would be better for his wife's health.

Lampman arrived in Gold Hill the first week of April, 1912 with his son Herbert. Ben's wife and two daughters, Carolyn and Hope, made their appearance in Gold Hill two weeks later.



Ben Hur Lampman taken ca. 1947 was famous for his flowing "windsor ties"

His father and brother had been living in the Rogue Valley since early in 1910. Brother Rex was editor of *The Gold Hill News*, Ben's parents were living in the Meadows near Asbestos on the Hillbilly Ranch. The senior Lampman had retired from the newspaper business and was trying his luck at farming.

Rex Lampman had been publisher of *The Gold Hill News* since his arrival in Gold Hill. Things were going fairly well for Rex, until a scandal shook the little town of Gold Hill.

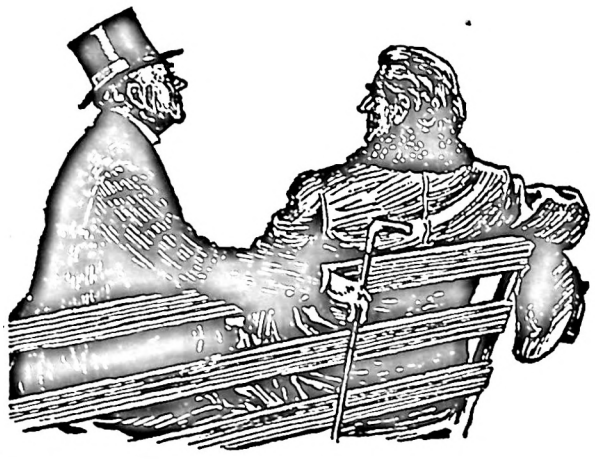
The superintendent of Gold Hill High School, H.E. Redding was accused

of inhumanly beating 14 year old Harry Hemler, with a rubber garden hose. Principal R.H. Swank witnessed the beating which took place in the basement of the school. Redding made young Hemler stand in a wheel barrow while administering the beating. Hemler was so severely bruised on his legs that he could not walk. He was confined to his bed for nearly a week. The reason for the beating ... Hemler failed to maintain an average mark of 85% on his studies.

The school board wanted the whole matter hushed, but the boy's father pressed assault and battery charges against Redding. Before Redding could stand trial, he was secretly ushered out of town, presumably with the aid of the school board. This enraged many of the Gold Hill citizens, and Rex Lampman was one of the most outspoken on the matter. As a result, several of the businessmen in town boycotted his newspaper. *The News* was published with little or no advertising for a few weeks. Rex ended up selling the paper to his brother Ben, accepted a job with the *Oregon Journal* and moved to Portland.

Ben was an excellent editor, it didn't take long for him to regain patronage from the Gold Hill businessmen.

His weekly columns entitled "Overdrafts, Secured and Unsecured"



Ben spent time on Gold Hill's "Liar's Bench" with old timers as they told their stories of days gone by. He listened with an attentive ear for unusual expressions, storing them in his fine mind for use at a later date.

soon earned him a following throughout the Rogue Valley. His proficiency with words was extraordinary. His prose was equated by many to poetry. He had the ability to paint vivid pictures of nature with words for his readers.

Ben was an passionate fisherman, when he wasn't working at the paper he could be found on the banks of the Rogue River fishing and taking in the sights and sounds of nature. The Rogue River and the community of Gold Hill were the subjects of many articles.

To earn extra income for his growing family, Lampman took the job as Gold Hill correspondent for the *Medford Mail Tribune* and *The Oregonian*. It was through his correspondence with *The Oregonian* that news editor Paul R. Kelty discovered him. Kelty recommended him to Edgar B. Piper who was at that time editor of *The Oregonian*. Piper offered him $25 a week to join the staff in Portland. How could he refuse, that was more money than he thought he would ever make in Gold Hill.

Lampman left Gold Hill for Portland in February of 1916. His wife Lena continued to publish the paper until it was sold to F. Wallace Sears in April.

During his first six years with *The Oregonian* he covered police reports, obituaries, funerals and church news. By 1922 he was promoted to an editorial writer. The stories, poems, articles and editorials that he wrote were reprinted nationwide and around the world. His following grew and his articles were easily recognized whether or not he signed his by-line. In 1939 he was again promoted to associate editor.

Lampman's beloved characters included Mr. Perkins from Suburbia, Him and Her who were always "jawing and jowering", the Little Old Lady at the End of the Car Line and her old gray cat, and Old Bill Smith and his dog Blinker. It was through these characters and many more that Ben related the beauty of nature in a whimsical and humorous way.

Through the years numerous honors were bestowed on Lampman. In 1928 his

these titles in our public libraries, and experience the poetic prose of Ben Hur Lampman; "How Could I Be Forgetting?", "At the End of the Car Line", "The Tramp Printer," "Here Comes Somebody," "The Coming of the Pond Fishes," and "The Wild Swan."

When the freeway was being planned in 1952, the State of Oregon acquired Lampman park. With budget cuts it has now become a low priority park. The picnic tables, bathrooms and water have been removed. The toilets were being used as garbage dumps and the water was being misused by residents of Gold Hill who got their water there instead of boiling the water provided by Gold Hill.

Would anyone be interested in revitalizing the park, restoring its beauty as it was when it was dedicated to our most famous ex-resident forty-five years ago?

It has been estimated that thousands of people have kept scrapbooks containing the essays and editorials written by Lampman. The Gold Hill Historical Society has acquired three such scrapbooks, including a copy of the 1947 Newsweek magazine. If you would like to look through them stop by the headquarters.

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At the End of the Car Line

Reprinted *The Oregonian* from January 25, 1954

President's Message

As this issue of the "Nuggets of News" comes off the press we can see some important accomplishments for 1992. Foremost among these events was the sale of our lot which gives our building fund a boost. (It is our goal to own our own building, preferably a historic one.) We also held a successful rummage sale, thanks to donations from our members & friends and built the winning float in the Gold Dust Day Parade. Our 1993 calendar is off the press and is a history book in itself with early day pictures and interesting anecdotes. They are now for sale at the museum.

I also wish to commend our dedicated members who man the museum from 10:00 am to 4:00 pm six days a week, as well as maintain our historical records. Without the efforts of these members, the society could not exist.

Fall is upon us with hunting season coming up. We always hope this is the year to get a big buck so to give you something to drool about, we are including some pictures of the good old days. Hope you have a successful season too.

Ted Wharton

TO A GREAT HUNTER

There is one going out, cried Dale to Ivan.
It is right across from you there.
Ivan saw it and shot,
But he missed the spot,
So Dale he blasted the air,
To his surprise before his eyes,
Over where the hill was bare.
The deer made a jump,
and was hit in the rump.
By the hunter called Dale,
I swear.

by Hip Shot
Wilmer Bailey

THE BIG BLUE DEER

Listen my boys and you shall hear,
The story of Hip Shot Bailey & his Big Blue Deer.
It was a nice, warm October day,
Hip Shot and Shorty was feeling gay. I told the boys to get on the stand,
They were good hunters, knew the lay of the land.
Into the brush went Dale & I with a crash.
And over the hill we saw a streak flash.
We heard a shot, then the air was still
Hip Shot had turned loose with a pill.
We rushed to the scene but man oh man
The poor little deer was shot thru the ham.
Now this boy had hunted for twenty years.
But alas, on its head was nothing but ears.
To make him feel better I said "Its a Peach!"
By that time poor Bailey had lost his speech.
And after the poor little Doe he did slay.
He whispered to me "Right there she will stay!"
We started to work on a set of horns
But they fit her head like a couple of thorns.
Now I want to swear this story is so...
The Big Blue Deer was a poor little Doe.

Ivan Smith 1950

The moniker "hip shot" results from a hunting trip whereby Wilmer Bailey made a fast shot through thick brush at a large buck. Results of the shot was a hole through the ham or "Hip". The agreement had been that whoever shot a deer in the ham had to keep that part as his share.

The hunters involved in these episodes had hunted many years together and were:
Wilmer Bailey
Ivan Smith
George Smith (Ivan's brother)
Shorty Smith (no relation)
Merritt Davis
Dale Smith (Ivan's cousin)

Ivan Smith was our President, Ted Wharton's uncle. He was married to Ted's mother Ida Starns sister Evagene.

Ivan Smith October 1962, Sardine Creek

THE DEER THAT LEAVE NO TRACKS

From the *Loggers World*
Edited by Finley Hayes
Written by Hoyt Simonson

We who live in Oregon are Salesmen for her charms her forests green, her air so clean, her fertile fields & farms.
She has lofty snow clad peaks to feed her lakes and streams.
Nature gave abundantly, beyond an artists dreams.
One more thing to ponder on, brains you say I lack,
We also have the only deer on earth that do not leave a track!
By now I'm sure you've guessed, I hunt for deer each fall
When leaves have turned to crimson and summers pleasures pall.
Then daily cares are laid aside, if only for a spell
Each evening round the fire there's stories to retell.

editorial "Be Kind to Animals" won him first prize in a nationwide contest, he placed second in the American Legion Editorial Appreciation contest in 1939. Lampman's editorials, poems and stories have been printed in the *New York Times, The Atlantic Monthly, Readers Digest, Saturday Evening Post, Nature and Sunset magazines*. His most famous "Where to Bury a Dog" was read on the radio program "The Voice of the Nation". He won O'Henry's best stories-of-the year for "Blinker Was a Good Dog" and "Old Bill Bent to Drink" in 1943 and 1945. Lampman was also given an honorary Master of Arts degree in 1943 by the University of Oregon. "In recognition of his mastery of the art of distinctive literary expression; his deep and poetic insight into the mysteries of nature; and his undying devotion to the task of dignifying through sympathetic understanding, the life and work of the common man." When he delivered the commencement speech at the University of Portland in 1947 an Honorary Doctorate of Law was presented to him.

Through the years the community of Gold Hill kept up with the success of their former editor and adopted son. He had given the town recognition through his reflections of the simple joyous years he had spent in Gold Hill fishing along the Rogue River. As a token of appreciation the town set about to honor their most famous ex-resident. (Gold Hill claimed him because this was the first place he lived upon arriving in Oregon.)

Early in 1947 a committee was organized to plan a celebration for the former publisher of *The Gold Hill News*. June 21, 1947 was designated the date and "Ben Hur Lampman Day" was announced. Invitations were sent to friends and associates of Lampman's. The invitation read as follows; "We, the people of Gold Hill, rejoicing in the fame acquired by our old friend and fellow townsman...in the field of letters, proud of the reputation he has achieved with his works...during the past many years and...pleased with the increased fame that has come to Gold Hill by the mere fact that he came from here, have decided to hold a Ben Hur Lampman day."

"Took a Notion You Kinda Rated It, Ben"

Reprinted from *The Oregonian* June 21, 1947

Invitations were sent to some of Lampman's notable associates which included Oregon's Governor Earl Snell, authors Ernest Haycox, Robert Ormond Case and Stewart Holbrook, Chester A. Moores, chairman of the board of directors of the Portland Chamber of Commerce; Donald B. Snyder, publisher of the *Atlantic Monthly*, Palmer Hoyt, editor and publisher of the *Denver Post*, M.J. Frey, general manager of *The Oregonian*, Marshall Dana, editor of the *Oregon Journal* and ex-Governors Ben W. Olcott and Oswald West.

H.D. Force who was chairman of the event proceeded to appoint sub-committees. The finance committee included A.A. Walker, chairman, Mayor Ralph Bell, Paul Thompson, Bertha Coy Ross and C.A. Tolman, George Haff was in charge of the salmon barbecue, Emil T. DiVecchio was the committee secretary and was also in charge of publicity. Delos Walker and Ferd Jones were put in charge of entertainment, Bill Hittle took charge of getting the yard in shape. The three local grocery merchants, A.A. Walker, Norman Gail and John Cogswell were on the food

committee. Arnold Gosnell, Dale Vincent, Walter McLean and Delos Walker were to get the salmon. John Cogswell planned the dance. The committees met on the first Friday of every month organizing every detail. There was to be a parade, baseball game between the North-Siders and the South-Siders, a tour of the town for the visiting dignitaries, and dance.

After months of preparation June 21st finally arrived. People from all over the state and nation were either in Gold Hill or sent telegrams. Telegraph operator, Thomas Buckingham reported the week as the busiest he had had in years. Some of the celebrities that signed the register were; Clark Gable, who with Tyrone Power and David Niven were on the Rogue fishing, Governor Snell and ex-Governors Oswald West and Ben W. Olcott.

BEN HUR LAMPMAN
DAY
GOLD HILL, OREGON
JUNE 21, 1947

PROGRAM

10:00 A. M.	Soft Ball Game North Siders vs. South Siders
11:30 A. M. 1:00 P. M.	Official guest tour of area.
2:00 P. M.	Parade
4:00 P. M.	Introduction and presentation of BEN HUR LAMPMAN City Hall Park
5:00 P. M.	Salmon barbecue—City Hall Park
9:00 P. M.	Dance—Tennis court of Gold Hill High School

Ben Hur Lampman Day
Sponsored by the Gold Hill Chamber of Commerce

The festivities began at 10:00 a.m. with the baseball game. The South-Siders beat the North-Siders 8-6. Other activities besides the impressive parade included horseback stunts, potato races on horseback, sack races, musical chairs, a horse-race where the participants had to speed to one end of the field and put on old clothing and return to where they started and who could forget the famous tobacco spitting contest!

While the tantalizing smell of barbecued salmon permeated the air, a crowd estimated at 2,500 listened to several dignitaries speak of Ben's genius. Philip H. Parrish who was editor of *The Oregonian* compared Mr. Lampman's inner ear for words with Mozart's gift for music. We learned how he could read a poem or verse once or twice and remember it word for word forty years later. Another anecdote that was related was that Ben was such an accurate reporter that a Congressional investigating committee meeting in Portland, postponed its hearings until Lampman could be found. He was found fishing. Governor Snell referred to Lampman as the country's leading nature essayist. There were many other wonderful complements paid to Ben Hur Lampman that sunny day in June. The biggest complement of all came when it was announced by State Representative Frank Van Dyke that a tract of land three quarters of a mile long and 100 feet deep along the river opposite the city of Gold Hill was dedicated in perpetuity as the Ben Hur Lampman park. The property was a gift from the county. The terms set forth provided that it could never be used for any other purpose.

Ben commented, "All my life I have dreamed of having a parcel of land named after me." "This day is a climax to all I have ever done."

Lampman received several other honors through the next years, the most outstanding came February 20, 1951 when he was named Oregon's poet laureate by legislative resolution and gubernatorial proclamation. His only comment was, "I want only the opportunity to prove true to the laureateship."

Lampman retired from the Oregonian after suffering from a stroke in 1951. He spent the last two years of his life in a nursing home following a series of cerebral hemorrhages, he died January 24, 1954.

Ben Hur Lampman was a great man, he was the author six books. Look for

The leading story nowadays as embers turn to black
Are of the herds of deer we have that not leave a track!
We have game counts of course, so many deer per mile
The herds are on the increase, we grit our teeth and smile.
I've hunted on the mountains and hunted "way down low
Tramped the brushy canyons and sloshed along in snow.
We've hunted all the way to hellandgone: hunted half way back
Now! Let the commission boys come out and show me all those tracks!
One question I'd have answered is a must,
All this game we talk about, we only hold in trust,
What of future generations, people as yet unborn,
Can they point to us with pride or point to us in scorn?
Let's stop this senseless slaughter and once again have back
Out bouncing, bounding herds of deer that leave a nice fresh track!

From the first of August 1991 to August 1, 1992, we have had 1903 people come in our museum. We would like to mention where some came from, quite a few from Washington and California some from Cincinnati, Ohio, Leeds, England, Westheim, Germany, Hong Kong, New Orleans, Vancouver B.C. Hopedale , Ill, Newton, Iowa, Sparks, Nevada, Anchorage Alaska, Emblem, Wyoming, Campbell River, B.C., Sydney Australia, West Branch, Michigan, Spearfish, South Dakota, Delta Jet Alaska, Missoula, Montana, Poland, Australia, Hawaii, San Antonio, Texas, St. Paul Minnesota, Jupiter, Florida, New Haven, Connecticut Maui, Hawaii, Spain, Alberta, Canada, Bountiful, Utah West Berlin, New Jersey.

We have also had members such as Jack Martin, Lafayette, Louisiana, Nancy & Bud Klagge, Aumsville, Oregon, Lee Large, Salem, Oregon, Inez Anderson, Houston, Texas, Jack & Mary Ciaccia Boulder, Colorado.

Since the first of June, 1991 when we opened up until this date, we have had close to 3,000 people pass through our doors.

Winona Nichols, Curator

WOW!

Wait until you see the 1993 calendar that Ted Wharton, Cindy Faubion and Clare Moore have put together. The 1993 is the best one to date and it is going to be something you will want to keep. They may be purchased at our museum, Rogue Drug, Southern Oregon Historical Society's History Store or at the Gold 'N Rogue KOA.

As members you need to know that winter hours will begin October 1, 1992. The Museum will be opened from 10:00 a.m. until 2:00 p.m. Tuesday through Saturday. We will be closed Sunday and Monday until further notice.

We need you the members

to help us keep our society fresh and exciting. We would love to hear your input on what direction you would like to see our society steered. We all have a common interest or we wouldn't be members would we? There are a number of painless ways you can help our society grow and "Record the Past for the Future".

1. Volunteer to man the office, we could use more people. It's a fun way to meet people from all over the world. Check out the various locations that Winona mentioned in her article.
2. We can always use help in the darkroom. Anyone interested will be

taught the easy to learn system we have set up. Remember we are all volunteers and we are all learning as we go.

3. Help us collect photographs. If you can't bring your photos in we will be glad to come to your location to copy them. Our photo collection can not grow without your help. Photographs help us account for the many families that made the city of Gold Hill what is today.

4. Supply us with family histories, we are in the process of building vertical files on as many area families as we can.

5. If you know someone who needs to have an oral history taken let us know or interview them for the society. We have two tape recorders available for this purpose. We also supply a biography form and question guidelines to help you with your interview. Come on in and we will show you the ropes. We would like to collect memories about farming, mining the railroad, the cement plant, schooling and logging.

6. We need members to help with our publications. If you would like to be involved with the next calendar, newsletter or booklet stop by and see what we've been doing.

7. Would you enjoy being involved with the young people of the community? You could volunteer to participate in activities we share with Patrick Elementary. Last year society members showed the students how to make butter. On another visit members shared their knowledge of the woods, Indian bead work and flint lock guns. Share your knowledge too.

8. Bring visitors to the museum and share our rich history with them.

9. You might be interested in preparing displays in the museum.

10. Most importantly come to the meetings. Our meetings are at 7:00 p.m. the third Tuesday of the month, at the Society's headquarters, 325 Second Ave.

Please give these ideas some thought, and decide how can you help your society?

Your Editor, Linda A. Genaw

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